

SILVER SPRING
TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting of November 12, 2009

Item 1, 2-Introductions/Approval of Minutes: Members introduced themselves. October's meeting minutes were tabled for review at December meeting due to lack of a quorum.

Item 3 – Chair's Comments: Co-Chair **Samantha Mazo** congratulated new and returning members **Martin Atkinson, Edward Furgol, Rukiyat Gilbert, Everton Latty** and **Michael Price**.

Item 4- IOS Update: **Ms. Mazo** introduced **Don Scheuerman** from Montgomery County Department of General Services (DGS), who updated the Committee on the Interim Operation Site (IOS). **Mr. Scheuerman** said that the IOS is running well with traffic flowing smoothly.

Mr. Scheuerman explained that overtime duty officers working in the IOS from 8 am to 8 pm were changed to having two officers for PM rush hour (4pm-8pm) due to the heavy, night time pedestrian traffic. Also the number of crossing guards has been extended to three or four instead of two. DOT has placed a "Left Yield on Green" sign at the Discovery garage entrance to deal with the intimidation some drivers exiting the garage feel from the oncoming buses that are making those left turns.

The three buildings on Wayne Avenue currently owned by Hines properties are being sold in December 2009 to Lloyd Moore, a local developer who has been involved in Silver Spring for many years.

Mr. Scheuerman noted other issues with the IOS have been with the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) water main replacement which has a chance of rupture. DGS is working with WSSC to keep the buses running during water utility construction. Silver Spring Transit Center (SSTC) construction has provided many relationship building opportunities for DGS and WSSC.

Mr. Scheuerman said they realize now it was a mistake not telling the public how much work would be involved in SSTC construction before construction above-ground would be evident. Most of the construction is underground between Bonifant and Ripley Streets, including water, sanitary, storm water and electric utility line relocation. Also erosion control ponds needed to be installed before construction could begin. Utility relocation on the SSTC is difficult due to 1,400 tons of contaminated soil which needed to be removed because the site was previously used for storage for petroleum products. There are also pipes made of asbestos that do not pose a hazard unless moved. Blasting will start in December to remove rock. The blasting will occur after rush hour and DGS is coordinating with the Regional Services Center, property management of surrounding

buildings, and traffic personnel. There will be blasting blankets (rolled cable with tires) to prevent flying debris, however most likely the blasts will not be felt.

In response to **Ms. Mazo's** and **Ms. Brecher's** questions, **Mr. Scheuerman** said business outreach is being done through the Chamber of Commerce and the Regional Services Center . He also said Metro Rail should not be affected by the blasts, but track monitors are in place.

Mr. Wexler asked about outreach to residents in the area who might not aware of the Regional Services Center List Serve. **Mr. Scheuerman** agreed that there should be more outreach and will work to get the word out. There will also be signage in the area. SSTC's expected completion date is first quarter of 2011.

Mr. Scheuerman announced Veteran's Plaza will be opening in July 2010. Silver Spring Library construction will begin July 2010, initially consisting of 6 to 9 months of major utility relocations. The Silver Spring Library is being constructed with the Purple Line in mind. Renderings are on the DGS website on the Building, Design and Construction /Neighborhoods page.

Mr. Scheuerman also announced the County Executive's Town Hall meeting is tonight. There will be major utility line work along Colesville Road and DGS has a snow removal contract in place for the coming winter. The Colesville Road work will take 4-8 weeks depending on amount of underground rock.

Mr. Price raised concerns regarding traffic back up issues at Discovery's garage. **Sgt. Harmon** suggested that Discovery place a security guard there to assist with existing from the garage from 5-6:30 p.m.

Item 5- County Updates

County Budget: **Ms. Brecher** announced the County has adopted a 15% printing reduction policy. She also circulated the County Executive's savings plan letter in which he has proposes suspension of FareShare and SuperFareshare programs. Silver Spring and Bethesda are not impacted by the cuts because they are funded by Parking Lot Districts. However they are at risk to be cut in the FY11 budget. The Council has decided that the other Super FareShare programs will continue til the end of the fiscal year, however they must find places to cut the budget. Also 400 County positions were cut over the past year.

SmarTrip/SmartBenefits: **Ms. Brecher** announced changes to SmarTrip cards and SmartBenefits programs. These changes, due to go into effect in January 2010, will divide benefits into three "purses" or compartments on the card: Employer-provided Transit Benefits, Employer-provided Parking Benefits, and Personal funds. Metro's current plan for Transit and Parking Benefits is that at the end of the month any unused benefits will be revoked and those funds returned to employers. They are planning to do this regardless of whether the employers contributed those funds or the employee paid them through payroll deduction. This is creating some consternation among employers

and employees. Commuter Services will be conducting an informational seminar on the changes to the SmarTrip and SmartBenefits system. In reference to FareShare suspensions, CSS will be urging employers to continue their portion of transit benefits and if they can't then to permit pretax payroll deductions of transit costs.

Other Updates:

- Commuter Services is moving to the Executive Office Building in Rockville in mid-November. The Silver Spring TRiPS Commuter Store will remain at its current location in downtown Silver Spring.
- The "S Schedule" for Ride On has been introduced. This will be the schedule used when Ride On cannot operate on its regular schedule due to "Special" types of events, mostly weather-related events such as severe storms and snow. Announcements that the S Schedule is being used will be made via standard media outlets (radio & TV), the Alert Montgomery system, and on the County's website.
- The Advisory Committee decided to reduce the number of meetings per year as a pilot for the coming year. No meetings will be scheduled for February, August, or November. However, if events require, meetings can still be scheduled for those months. In December 2010 a review of how this reduced schedule has worked will be made.
- Sergeant Harmon announced there have been several pedestrian safety details conducted recently, especially at the intersection of Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue, and many citations were issued. There will be several more pedestrian safety enforcement efforts during the holiday season in the downtown Silver Spring area.
- The crosswalks were moved back from the intersection of Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue some time ago. Sgt. Harmon does not believe that benefited pedestrian safety because it removed pedestrians from the peripheral vision of drivers and promoted greater speed in their turning movements. SHA has agreed and will be moving the crosswalks back toward the front of the intersection and improving pedestrian access there.
- Mel Tull expanded on the crosswalk discussion by noting a contract has been let to improve the intersection of Colesville Road and Georgia Avenue from an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standpoint, by replacing poles, relocating pedestrian signals, improving ramps, etc. Work is scheduled to begin in December 2009. The work will include Colesville Road south to East-West Highway, and work along Wayne Avenue.

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